

**Gulf of Mexico Alliance  
Environmental Education Network  
Underserved and Underrepresented Populations Working Group**

**Initial Conference Call 11/07/06**

**Work Group Attendees:**

Lead: Susan Testroet-Bergeron, Barataria Terrebonne Natl. Estuary Program Susan@btnep.org

Facilitator: Lee Yokel, GOMA Environmental Education Coordinator lyokel@disl.org

James Alton, NRCS, alton.james@la.usda.gov

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Greg Ira, FL Dept. of Environmental Protection, greg.ira@dep.state.fl.us

Jennifer Buchanan, Grand Bay NERR, jen.buchanan@dmr.ms.gov

Kris Shipman, TX Parks & Wildlife kris.shipman@tpwd.state.tx.us

Richard Gonzales, Gulf of Mexico Foundation, richard@gulfmex.org

Richard Makopondo, Dept. of Tourism, Rec., & Sport Management., Univ. of Florida,  
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Tara Shultz, Texas State Aquarium, tschultz@txstateaq.org

Tricia LeBlanc, Audubon Aquarium of the Americas, tleblanc@AudubonInstitute.org

This was the first call for this Working Group. Volunteers were solicited at the Rookery Bay Environmental Education Network meeting, the Gulf of Mexico Alliance Implementation & Integration Workshop, an email solicitation of the list serv members, and word of mouth by forwarded emails to potential interested individuals. Lee Yokel gave a very brief introduction about the Gulf of Mexico Alliance and Susan Bergeron directed the call.

**Current Homework**

1. Defining and Underserved and Underrepresented Population  
Tricia LeBlanc

The group is to submit their definition of an underserved or underrepresented population to Tricia. Deadline to submit information is Tuesday, November 14, 2006. Tricia will compile the information and at the next conference call the Working Group will discuss the results.

2. Review Organization Inventory Spreadsheet  
Lee Yokel and Susan Testroet-Bergeron

The group is to review an excel spreadsheet for the purpose of inventorying organizations that maybe working with UUP or have the potential to do so regarding environmental education. Comments for those fields are to be submitted to Lee or Susan by Tuesday, November 14, 2006. This spreadsheet will then be amended and sent back out to the compilers and state volunteer leads to conduct the Organization Inventory.

3. How diverse is the GOMA partnership? Organization Inventory  
Richard Makopondo (lead), Bryan Fluech (co-lead)  
Florida: Richard Makopondo, Bryan Fluech, Greg Ira, Chris Verlinde  
Alabama: Lee Yokel  
Mississippi: Jennifer Buchanan  
Louisiana: Tricia LeBlanc, Susan Testroet-Bergeron, Alton James  
Texas: Tara Shultz, Richard Gonzales

The group is to inventory organizations that maybe working with UUP or have the potential to do so regarding environmental education. State leads are to develop an inventory for their states (state, federal, non-for-profit, etc.) and submit their list to the task leads Richard and Bryan. Individuals wishing to participate may either submit to their state lead or the overall lead for this effort. Deadline for compilation is Friday, December 15, 2006.

4. Draft Survey  
Lee Yokel and Richard Gonzales, Bryan Fluech and Richard Makopondo reviewers

These volunteers will review current draft surveys to refine a document that can be used to query organizations from the inventory on specifics within their programs.

5. Organize a mid-December call and resend draft documents  
Lee Yokel

## **Acronyms**

GOMA = Gulf of Mexico Alliance

UUP = Underserved and Underrepresented Populations

## **Agenda General Notes**

### **Define what is an underserved and underrepresented population?**

An initial discussion reviewed what was considered an Underserved or Underrepresented Population. The group briefly discussed guidelines for a definition. A volunteer was sought to gather information on various definitions and then the topic will be discussed by the UUP Working Group in the next call (see homework above). It was noted that it is up to the group to decide what this target population will be.

### **Descriptions Noted**

Dept.of Agriculture – small scale farmers and producers (100 acres or less)

EPA – environmental justice program – broadly defined as fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, etc. – up to group to define

Rookery Bay Workshop noted traditional groups as well as “outside the choir” of those with whom we normally work

Audubon Institute - socioeconomic standpoint instead of minority, look at schools who are on freed or reduced meal program; what are the obstacles to reaching them or them to us?

Group may need two separate levels to connect to funding as some groups are more vocal than others but may represent a smaller audience within UUPs. Need to consider the level of services being delivered versus the UUP represented.

Take definition beyond K-12 students and include adult populations as well

### **How diverse is the GOMA partnership?**

Initially, before undertaking any pilot projects, the UUP Working Group needs to find out what is currently going on around the five US Gulf states. The group brainstormed organizations in each that might be or are conducting environmental education programs in UUPs. Volunteers were solicited to compile a list of programs (see above homework).

Compilation of programs will be broken into these groups:

1. State Departments of Education
2. Formal Education
  - a. K-12
  - b. University
3. Informal Education
  - a. K-12
  - b. adults
4. Divide into regions within states where appropriate

Discussion noted that a majority of people are not in groups so hard to reach them via a list. Some organizations have a better potential to reach these people so who are those they? There are also social and environmental justice groups that are mainly interested in these UUPs. We may be able to reach a larger group of people through those groups.

Brief Brainstorming Session – *NOT* inclusive

### *Florida*

Audubon of Florida

Florida A&M Environmental Science Institute, Dr. Richard Gragg

PACE School for Girls – target audience African American females

FL Dept. of Environmental Quality

Univ. of FL ISAS, extension programs

FL Sea Grant

South FL Water Management District Education Program

Smaller Watershed Groups – Bay Area Resource Council in panhandle

Watershed Action Volunteers St Johns Water Management District

Non-formal education providers around state – museums, etc.

COSEE

SAME

*Alabama*

University of South Alabama

Boys and Girls Club

SAME

COSEE

*Mississippi*

Jackson State University – Dr. Yuan, Environmental Cooperative Science Center

Turkey Community Creek Initiative – Gulfport – oldest African American community on coast  
community and watershed issues

Environmental Justice Organization in Gulfport (social too?)

MS Dept. of Marine Resources program to Vietnamese community

Boys and girls clubs

New Audubon center in Moss Point

Under utilized / underserved – reaching out to judges

Ms Environmental Education Alliance –

SMEACO - South MS Environmental Agricultural Coordinator Organization

Univ. Southern MS Marine Education Center – summer camp for students from the delta  
(minority communities)

NMEA

COSEE

SAME

*Louisiana*

Audubon Institute - Dept of Communications – specifically to underserved community

LEEA

*Texas*

TS Environmental Education Advisory Committee – Dept of Education

Informal Science Education Association

TX Association of Environmental Educators

TX Marine Educator Association

Adopt-a-Beach – TX General Land Office – 26 sites along coastline

Winter beach cleanup

CIAP – county governments potential partners in coastal conservation issue

TX Master Naturalists

High accountability – River Authorities – doing more downstream programs with environmental  
education

Public school districts – state mandated 4 yr science standards – coast / environment classes  
popping up – curriculum motivation

Science and Spanish Club Network Gulf of Mexico Foundation – target audience middle school  
– boys and girls club connection now  
Boys and Girls Club – vast network

### *General Groups*

COSEE  
SAME  
AAEE  
National Park Service

### **Program Information Survey**

Once the initial Organization Inventory is completed, the UUP Working Group will need to get more information from ongoing programs. The survey is merely a fact finding exercise to attain details of the individual programs and not for the purpose of gathering opinions. Two sample surveys were presented for review to the group. Volunteers will review the samples, refine them, and present them back to the group. Utilizing an Adobe form or Survey Monkey will be researched for the best method of distributing the survey. Jennifer Buchanan has offered the Grand Bay NERR Survey Monkey membership and Lee Yokel with GOMA Dauphin Island Sea Lab will administer it. Sample questions in Spanish may also be developed within the survey.

One survey was generated using the NAAEE site which contains more forceful language. The second draft contains questions of general information or what we might want to learn. The survey design should shape questions in categories for criteria used? It should also provide discrete answers to provide direction as well as open-ended questions.

### **Other Comments**

It was noted that the UUP Working Group needs to consider the language issue. Information we generate will need to be translated. An important point was that the group needs to consider who the documents are for – that English speakers as well as Spanish speakers need to know the information within the documents. The group needs to make sure the messages get to the right people – for everyone – and distribution is the key – important for everyone to learn information.

A concern was expressed that we are too broad in our net to capture organizations and their programs. It was noted that the group needs to set some parameters for is contacted with the survey. A narrow set of parameters will allow better focus. The group wants to be sure to capture information from organizations that are pursuing systematic objectives with long term objectives. It will also keep the information to a manageable number of programs. Hoping we are looking for practices and methods that work – need to look at successful track records – end goal to learn from others so we can replicate them adapt to our areas / programs

It was also noted that the organization review needs to be comprehensive not exclusive. This would facilitate in identifying how other programs conduct activities. An example of how the

Park Service conducts funding at a national level by delegating responsibilities to regions and agents. This is also a good way of getting funding.

The call was concluded by saying that once the initial Organization Inventory is conducted, a need to refine the list for the survey could occur. Perhaps more than one survey will be needed. The group maybe considering a market analysis then prioritizing followed by a needs assessment.